

Dolores River, Segment 1



ESSENTIAL FACTS

Length: 5.9 miles

Corridor Acres: Approx. 1,889

Classification: Recreational

Outstandingly Remarkable Values: Scenery, Recreation, Wildlife, Fish, Geology/Hydrology, Ecological

LOCATION

Colorado/Utah State Line to Fisher Creek

Moab Field Office

Canyon Country District

Grand County, Utah

2nd Congressional District

Utah State Office



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General Description

This segment of the Dolores River is characterized by narrowing canyon walls, riparian vegetation and outstanding geology. A float trip on the Dolores River offers views, camping, scenic hiking opportunities and whitewater boating challenges for those who like technical rivers. BLM has limited use of this section to 13 commercial outfitters, who use it seasonally as flows allow. The riparian vegetation is characterized by cottonwood galleries. This segment of the river is crucial mule deer and elk winter range, and is important to a diversity of avian and terrestrial wildlife. It is particularly important to raptors, as it provides excellent habitat for them. The river also provides habitat for migratory birds, and is home to bear and mountain lion. There are two Utah sensitive species, the Bluehead Sucker and the Roundtail Chub, which inhabit this segment of the Dolores River. The canyon displays excellent visibility of the geologic process and an unusually long sequence of Colorado Plateau stratigraphy. The Dolores River canyon is an important key to the Uncompahgre Uplift and to understanding the stream piracy of the ancestral Gunnison and Colorado rivers.

Summary

This segment has regionally and nationally significant Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) and designation of this segment would provide a unique scenic, wildlife and recreation experience to the National System. Future congressional designation would protect free flow and ORVs. The segment is withdrawn from mineral entry under the 1872 Mining Law by Secretarial Order.

Grand County supports the designation of this segment, and sees the economic benefits provided by the rafting industry in the county. There are no anticipated negative effects from designation because there are no competing resource considerations. The entire corridor is managed as no surface occupancy for oil and gas and all other surface disturbing activities in the 2008 Moab Resource Management Plan. Finally, the segments downstream have been found suitable by the BLM and together these segments represent a significant contribution to the integrity of the Dolores River system, a tributary of the Colorado River.

It is interesting to note that Dolores River Segment 1 was the subject of an earlier Wild and Scenic River study. It was found to be suitable as "Scenic" in 1979 in an EIS completed by the National Park Service, in cooperation with the Utah Department of Natural Resources.

Rivers Suitable for WSR Designation on Bureau of Land Management Lands in Utah

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